

**Press release – 23 March 2009, Oslo, Norway**

## **Wilhelmsen Ships Service moves e-commerce forward to cut customer prices & increase efficiencies.**

Wilhelmsen Ships Service is improving its e-commerce model by moving its e-business partner and fully owned subsidiary Marine Transaction Services' (MTS) customer business solutions in-house. The strategic move is tied to the company's vision for how to carry out sales, order handling and customer service in the future.

"Even though we own MTS – one of the maritime market's most advanced transaction solutions – we're looking to remove third parties as much as possible in order to further strengthen our customer relationships. By bundling efficient IT/customer business solutions and systems, we look to increase operational efficiencies and utilise our industry-leading maritime network to become the most customer-centred supplier on the market," says Wilhelmsen Ships Service President David Tandy.

The MTS e-commerce solution will now be integrated into Wilhelmsen Ships Service's Customer Business Solutions offering, but won't be marketed separately by the company in any manner. "We don't see e-commerce as a special product – rather as a part of our larger offer to customers," says Frederic Fontarosa, Vice President of International Sales & Market Segments.

### **Instant customer advantages**

Customers should see advantages straight away – not least on the financial side. The change means that the monthly subscription fees previously associated with customers utilising MTS will become a thing of the past. Additionally, the money and time Wilhelmsen Ships Service saves by bundling in Customer Business Solutions will be passed along to customers through more dedicated service and lower prices.

Wilhelmsen Ships Service made waves a few weeks back when it announced that it was freezing product prices for 2009. Now, when customers utilise its e-commerce offer, the company takes matters one step further. "Not only will e-commerce be free for our customers after implementation in their back office systems, but we're also looking to pass our savings along. Therefore all customers utilising this solution will receive a 1% discount across the board on all products," says Fontarosa.

### **Flexibility is key**

There will be a transition period during 2009 in moving the MTS solution in-house, but one that's necessary in order to ensure smooth operations and that continued support is in place for both Wilhelmsen Ships Service and customers. The company also feels it's important to provide customers the opportunity to use the same interface towards their other suppliers. "Customers have a number of suppliers, and multiple interfaces are neither cost effective nor a practical solution. They don't have to use this interface with other suppliers, but we feel the compatibility option is important," Fontarosa says.

Finally, while Wilhelmsen Ships Service strongly believes in e-commerce's ability to help customers spend less time processing orders and gain transparency, the company stresses that it's just one piece of a total service offer. "The traditional communication channels will continue to exist, and customers will have the same contact as always. The e-commerce solution is simply another way to do business," Tandy says.

**Wilhelmsen Ships Service** is part of Wilhelmsen Maritime Services, a Wilh. Wilhelmsen group company. It has the world's largest maritime services network, with the ability to service 2 200 ports in 116 countries. The company's main focus is to deliver improved vessel operating efficiency to the merchant fleet. In 2008 the company made 222 000 product deliveries to 21 400 vessels and handled 53 000 port calls. Wilhelmsen Ships Service has 4 400 employees operating out of 310 offices in 71 countries. For more information, see [www.wilhelmsen.com/shipsservice](http://www.wilhelmsen.com/shipsservice)

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